

POLAVARAM IRRIGATION PROJECT, ANDHRA PRADESH

Background on Polavaram (Interstate agreement)

Polavaram Irrigation Project an interstate project on river Godavari has been conceived as a part of recommendations of Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal (GWDT). GWDT finalized its award in 1980. The award identifies individual projects that can be taken up by the co-basin states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh (including Chhattisgarh), Orissa, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh (AP) on the main Godavari River as well as its tributaries. As a part of the award, the states of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa executed an agreement dated 02-04-1980 to enable clearance of Polavaram Project to be undertaken by AP. The agreement provides for construction of the project with a Full Reservoir Level of 150 Feet and with a spillway discharging capacity of 36 Lakh Cusecs at pond level of 140 feet and not less than 20 Lakh Cusecs at a pond level of 130 feet. In order to protect the lands and properties above level of 150 feet, in Orissa and Chhattisgarh, protective embankments with adequate drainage sluices have been provided at the cost of the project. Relevant provisions of the agreement are reproduced below.

“Polavaram project spillway shall be designed for a flood discharge capacity of 36 Lakh cusecs at the pond level of 140 feet and not less than 20 lakh cusecs at pond level of 130 feet.

In order to protect the lands and properties above 150 feet in the territory of Orissa likely to be affected due to construction of Polavaram project, protective embankments with adequate drainage sluices shall be constructed and maintained at the cost of Polavaram project. However, the state of Orissa may exercise an option at the time of construction of Polavaram project for compensation to land and property likely to be affected above 150 feet as agreed in case of state of Madhya Pradesh (now Chhattisgarh).

For damages or injury to lands beyond 150 feet in the territory of Madhya Pradesh (now Chhattisgarh), in any event, the state of Andhra Pradesh shall pay full compensation for such damage or injury as may be assessed by the District Collector of the said district of the state of Madhya Pradesh(now Chhattisgarh).

The matter of design of the dam and its operation schedule shall be left to Central Water Commission, which they shall decide keeping in view all the agreements between the parties including the agreement of 2nd April 1980 filed today, as far as practicable.”

Project in Brief

The Polavaram Irrigation Project is on the river Godavari near Ramayyapeta village of Polavaram Mandal, about 34 km upstream of Kovvur-Rajahmundry road-cum-rail bridge and 42 km upstream of Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage, where river emerges out of the last range of the Eastern Ghats and enters the plains in West Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. This multi-purpose major irrigation project is intended for development of a gross irrigation potential of 4,36,825 ha and stabilization under Godavari delta. The project also envisages generation of 960 MW of hydro power, 23.44 TMC drinking water supply to a population of 28.50 lakh in enroute 611 villages and diversion of 80 TMC of water to Krishna River basin.

The project implements Godavari-Krishna link under Interlinking of rivers project. The project envisages transfer of 80TMC of surplus Godavari water to river Krishna which will be shared between AP, Karnataka and Maharashtra in proportion of 45 TMC by AP and 35 TMC by Karnataka and Maharashtra as per the decision of the GWDT award.

Status of appraisal

The project proposal of Polavaram Irrigation Project was considered and accepted by the Advisory Committee of MoWR, RD&GR in its 95th meeting for Rs.10,151.04 cr at PL 2005-06 and in its 108th meeting the cost was revised to Rs. 16,010.45 cr at PL 2010-11.

Investment Clearance was accorded by Planning Commission vide letter No. 2(168)/2004-WR dated 25.02.2009 for Rs.10,151.04 cr at PL 2005-06 and the revised Investment Clearance was accorded by Ministry of Water Resource, RD&GR, GoI vide letter No. P.20011/2/2016-SPR/947-58 dated 08.05.2017 for Rs. 16,010.45 cr at PL 2010-11.

Subsequently, Project Authorities have submitted Second Revised Cost Estimate (RCE) of Polavaram Irrigation Project at 2017-18 PL. The Second Revised Cost Estimate (RCE) at 2017-18 PL was examined by Central Water Commission and was placed before Advisory Committee of Ministry of Water Resources, RD&GR in its 141st meeting held on 11.02.2019. The same was accepted by the Advisory Committee for an amount of Rs.55,548.87 cr. Thereafter, upon the approval of Advisory Committee of MoWR, RD&GR, a Revised Cost Committee (RCC) has been formed under the Chairmanship of JS& FA of MoWR, RD & GR on 02.04.2019 to examine the cost escalation of Polavaram Irrigation Project. The Committee has submitted its report on 17.03.2020 and recommended for Rs. 29,027.95 cr at 2013-14 PL and for Rs. 47,725.74 cr at 2017-18 PL.

As per Ministry of Finance OM No.F.No.1(2) PF-1/2014(Pt) dated 30.09.2016; Central Government will provide 100% of the remaining cost of the irrigation component only of the project for the period starting from 01.04.2014 to the extent of the cost of the irrigation component on that date.

As per the directions of Ministry of Jal Shakti, DoWR, RD& GR letter. dt 21.10.2020, PPA in its 13th meeting held on 02.11.2020, approved the Revised cost estimate of Irrigation component at Rs 20,398.61 cr figure for 2013-14 PL and an amount of Rs 4730.71 cr as the expenditure incurred on Irrigation component of Polavaram Irrigation Project till 01.04.2014.

Court cases (Before Hon'ble Supreme Court of India)

1. Government of Orissa has filed **Original Suit No. 4 of 2007** and various Interlocutory Applications (IAs) in the Hon'ble Supreme Court against clearances granted by various Central Agencies including MoWR against proceeding with the construction of Polavaram project by Andhra Pradesh Government and making defendant no. 1 to Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, defendant no. 2 to Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), Government of India,

defendant No. 3 to Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) and defendant No.4 to Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA).

2. Government of Chhattisgarh has filed **Original Suit No. 3 of 2011** along with IA in the Hon'ble Supreme Court against clearances granted by various Central Agencies including MoWR and against proceeding with the construction of Polavaram project by Andhra Pradesh Government and making defendant no. 1 to Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, defendant no. 2(a) to Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), Government of India, defendant No. 2(b) to Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), defendant No. 2(c) to Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and defendant no. 3 to Central Water Commission.
3. Government of Telangana has filed **Original suit No.1 of 2019** in the Hon'ble Supreme Court against to protect more than 100 villages and important heritage sites of religious significance and heavy water plant etc., which will face severe submergence due to all effects including backwaters of the Polavaram Project and for conducting public hearing in the affected districts of Telangana as per Environment Protection Act making Union of India as defendant no. 1, defendant no. 2 to state of Andhra Pradesh, defendant no.3 to state of Odisha, defendant no.4 to state of Chhattisgarh and others.
4. Hon'ble Supreme Court vide its order dated 11.4.2011 has nominated Mr. M. Gopalakrishnan, Retired Member of Central Water Commission(CWC) along with Members of CWC to inspect of Polavaram dam and submit a report to the Hon'ble Supreme Court separately to find out whether construction of Polavaram dam is carried out in terms of GWDT Award.

Mr. M. Gopalakrishnan and Members of CWC have visited the Polavaram dam during 23-24th May, 2011 and separately submitted their report dated 14.6.2011 to the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

In both the reports of Mr. M. Gopalakrishnan and Members of CWC, it was concluded that the planning of Polavaram project and limited construction activities seen so far by the team at the Polavaram dam site are in tune with approved project and GWDT provisions.

As per the Hon'ble Court order, the court cases OS No.4, OS No.3& OS No.1 were tagged together and further listing is awaited.

Inclusion of Polavaram Irrigation Project as National Project

As per Andhra Pradesh State Reorganization Act (APRA), 2014, the Polavaram Irrigation Project was declared as a National Project under Section 90 and it is expedient in the public interest that the Union should take under its control the regulation and development of the Polavaram Irrigation Project for the purposes of irrigation. And whereas under Sub-section (4) of Section 90 of the Act mandates that the Central Government shall execute the project and obtain all requisite clearances including environmental, forests, and rehabilitation and resettlement norms.

Ministry of Finance vide F.No.1(2)/PF-1/2014(Pt) dated 30.09.2016 has conveyed that in view of the recommendations of the Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, that it will be appropriate for the State Government of Andhra Pradesh to execute this project (as it is an important project and the State Government is keen to complete it at the earliest), the Government of India has agreed to the State's request for execution of the project by the State Government on behalf of Government of India.

Further, the OM states that Government of India will provide 100% of the remaining cost of the irrigation component only of the project for the period starting from 01/04/2014, to the extent of the cost of the irrigation component on that date.

Stop work order by MoEF

As per MoEF& CC letter dated 16.02.2022, stop work order dated 08/02/2011 is further kept in abeyance for a period of two more years, i.e upto 02/07/2023.